

# PLACE Fall 2020

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the enhancement of open space in Brookline by supporting citizens in caring for their green spaces.

**In this issue:  
Building a Sustainable Community**

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### Editor Marian Lazar

BGSA is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax deductible.

# Farewell. . .

BGSA is saddened to announce the loss of two long time members and Board members, Frank Caro and Bruce Wolff. We will miss them and hope we can continue the spirit with which they approached improving our community and protecting the environment.

Frank was very active in the Brookline community. He served as a Town Meeting Member in Precincts 8 and 10 for sixteen years and as a Town Advisory Committee Member for seven years. Frank worked to establish the Brookline Community Aging Network (BrooklineCAN) and served as the BrooklineCAN Co-Chair with Ruthann Dobek until his death. He was instrumental in making Brookline the first Age-Friendly City in MA and in the establishment of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Frank served on the Board of the BGSA and as the President of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Hall's Pond Sanctuary, where he developed and ran a seasonal bi-weekly volunteer maintenance crew to take care of the gardens.

Bruce was a peace-loving environmentalist and long time Board member. He was a talented photographer who shared with us his skills and fervor and his intense desire to make the world a better place. Bruce was committed to reducing the negative impact of invasive species. His volunteerism included photography for *Landscapes of Brookline*, maintenance and enhancement of Hall's Pond, pruning at Minot Rose Garden and tabling for BGSA. Anyone with him could feel how deeply he cared.



Bruce Wolff and Frank Caro at Hall's Pond

# Building a Sustainable Community

This issue of PLACE discusses various ways of insuring a sustainable future for Brookline. 2030 districts discussed on page four suggest a route to a more sustainable built environment. The Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Masterplan under study (page 6) will point the way to creating an urban forest that can withstand the changing climate. Another action to improve resiliency of the Town is a report commissioned by Town Administrator Mel Kleckner from the Collins Center for Public Management. Initially the goal of the study was to a study to determine the proper role and placement of the position of Sustainability Program Administrator. It became apparent that an assessment of Brookline’s response to its emerging set of sustainability values required considering more than the experiences of a single position and where it should reside. To this end, the Study Team also reviewed how resident and staff engagement and the policy/advisory relationships established by the Town work to support the sustainability agenda.

The study team found that the climate advocacy community wants urgent action from an organizational structure not designed to move quickly. Frustrated by the perceived inaction of the Town’s executive leadership over the last several years, advocates have used their political power in Town Meeting to pass a number of actions outside Brookline’s tradition of resident/staff collaboration. This trend has resulted in missed opportunities to leverage Town resources most effectively to achieve climate priorities and environmental enhancement and to balance these priorities with other community values and needs. These actions stem, at least in part, from the lack of a complete and detailed Climate Action Plan woven into the fabric of the Town’s strategic planning.

*The full report and recommendations can be found at: <https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22352/Brookline-Sustainability-Final-Report---August-2020?bidId=>*

All Town Meeting will consider placing the Community Preservation Act (CPA) on the May townwide ballot. The CPA is a tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge on the real estate tax; the warrant article proposes a 1% tax. After approval by Town Meeting the CPA must be accepted by a townwide ballot referendum.

The CPA statute also creates a statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund, administered by the Department of Revenue (DOR), which provides distributions each year to communities that have adopted CPA. Trust fund revenues are derived from a surcharge placed on all real estate transactions at the state’s Registries of Deeds. The surcharge is levied whether or not a municipality has passed the CPA. Brookline transactions currently fund the Trust Fund but derive no local benefit. The surcharge for most documents filed at the Registries is \$50, which is immediately deposited in the CPA Trust Fund held at the Department of Revenue (DOR).

Property taxes traditionally fund the day-to-day operating needs of safety, health, schools, roads, maintenance, and more. But until CPA was enacted, there was no steady funding source for preserving and improving a community’s character. **The Community Preservation Act gives a community the funds needed to enhance its quality of life.**



on November  
Town Meeting Warrant

## What are 2030 Districts and what is their relevance to Open Space in Brookline?


by Deborah Rivers, AIA, LEED AP

2030 Districts® began under the umbrella of Architecture 2030, a global initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment to zero by 2030. Initially focused on reducing energy use in buildings to become carbon neutral by 2030, Architecture 2030 has continued to broaden their horizons to consider other aspects of the built environment.


Architecture 2030 developed the 2020 Palette (<http://www.2030palette.org/palette/>) to provide strategies for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change. The various strategies range in scale from the Region down to individual Buildings. Some of the elements in the Palette include:

- Region: Habitat Corridors, Transit Corridors, Hazard Mapping
- City/Town: Heat Island Mitigation, Parks, and Urban Bikeways
- District: Complete Streets, Transit Oriented Development and Residential Density
- Site: Sustainable Sites including environmentally responsible methods of treating water, soils, and vegetation
- Buildings: Cool and Green Roofs, Solar Shading, and Daylighting

Parks are acknowledged as important elements in the effort to create more sustainable built environments by providing social, physical and recreational opportunities, as well as offering habitat for wildlife and biodiversity. Urban bikeways are referenced as a safe way to encourage this alternative means of transportation. While these and various other strategies included in the 2030 Palette were created primarily with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the symbiosis with preservation and creation of green open spaces within the built environment becomes evident. Not only can these measures help reduce negative human impact on the climate, they offer the promise of a more livable environment for people and other species.



REGION CITY/TOWN DISTRICT SITE BUILDING MATERIAL



**Parks provide social, physical and recreational opportunities, as well as offer habitat for wildlife and biodiversity.**

Locate smaller parks within short walking distances of the residences they serve. Larger parks serve entire cities, are bounded by public-rights of way and attached to other public uses such as schools and community centers.

**Guidelines for parks:**

- Small Parks – 250 m<sup>2</sup> to 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> (2,500 sf to one acre) within 400 meters (¼ mile) of housing;
- District Parks – 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> (5 to 10 acres) within 400 to 800 meters (¼ mile to ½ mile) of housing;
- City/Town Parks – 1/8 km<sup>2</sup> to 1/5 km<sup>2</sup> (30 to 50 acres) within 1 kilometer to 5 kilometers (½ mile to 3 miles) of various districts.

Create open space corridors and greenways that include walking, jogging, and bicycling paths connecting parks and residential areas to places where people work, shop or socialize.

Starting Center  
ASPECT Studios  
The Long Harbour, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia



Burlington, Vermont has accepted the 2030 Challenge for Planning

In January 2017, 2030 Districts® (<https://www.2030districts.org>) became independent after 5 years as part of Architecture 2030. 2030 Districts “are unique private/public partnerships that bring property owners and managers together with local governments, businesses, and community stakeholders to provide a business model for urban sustainability through collaboration, leveraged financing, and shared resources.” Currently, there are twenty-two established 2030 Districts in North America. As public/private partnerships, they have been effective at accomplishing goals that municipal governments can’t accomplish on their own. And while their primary objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, they can bring about more habitable urban environments through the employment of some of the strategies mentioned above.

2030 Districts do not have to incorporate an entire municipal entity. They can be a district within a city or town. The boundaries and the framework for a particular district are defined by the stakeholders as they develop the plan for the District. A District must commit to meeting the goals of the ‘2030 Challenge for Planning’ which aims to reduce energy consumption (for new construction) to carbon neutral, water consumption by 50%, and transportation emissions by 50% by 2030. The methods of getting there will vary according to the unique conditions and challenges of each locality.

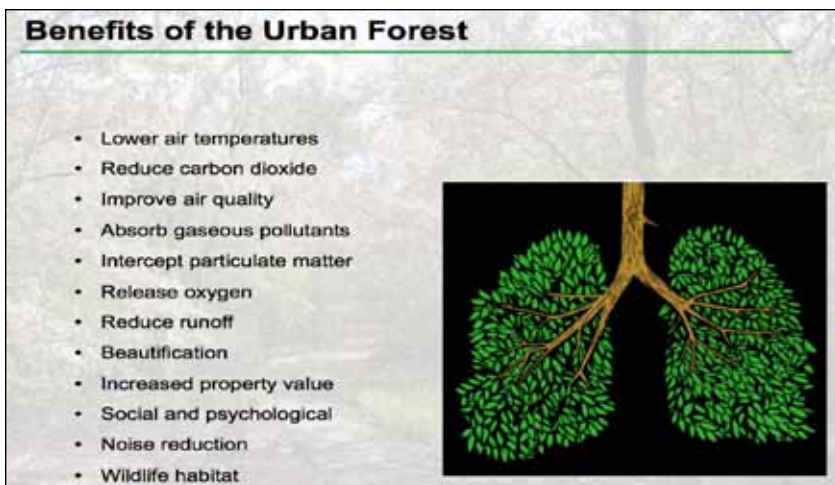
Membership in the 2030 District Network provides resources and technical support to newly formed as well as established districts. Members share their strategies and results of their initiatives. By sharing information, 2030 Districts can avoid reinventing the wheel and can learn from the experiences of other like-minded municipalities. With its commitment to becoming Carbon neutral by 2050 and its planning for the future of open space and other smart growth strategies, Brookline is well-suited to benefit from the establishment of a 2030 District. It could provide a valuable framework for implementing many policies already proposed and a roadmap to accomplishing its goals through the private/public partnership.

*Follow the work of the Selectboard’s Climate Action Committee (SBCAC) to monitor progress in Brookline.*

# Urban Forest Climate Resiliency

by Katie Weatherseed

The Parks and Open Space Division of Brookline's Department of Public Works is developing an Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan (UF-CRMP) for the Town of Brookline. In February 2020, the Division of Parks and Open Space was awarded a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) Action Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to develop the Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan. In March 2020, work commenced on the project. The need for an Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan arose out of the 2017 Climate Vulnerability Assessment planning process. This Plan identified the significance of the urban canopy as a nature-based solution to climate change, and recommended several priority actions and strategies aimed at sustaining and strengthening the urban forest.

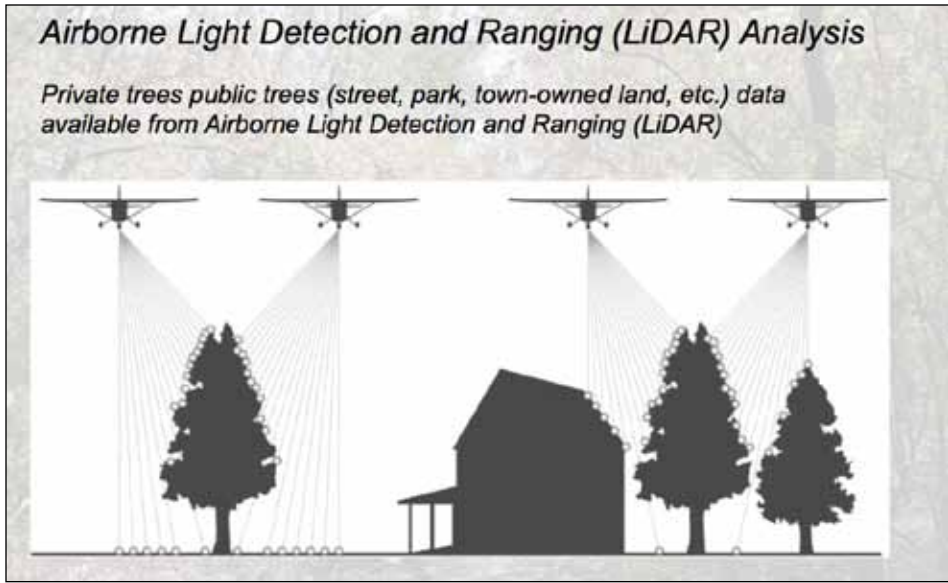


The Plan is intended to position the Town to proactively prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Town's public and private trees. The UFCRMP will include an assessment of the health and condition of the Town's street trees (including genus diversity, tree condition ratings, and tree size [dbh] analysis), an analysis of the entire urban forest using LiDAR technology, a review of the Town's forestry maintenance and management practices and emergency procedures, and the development of goals and actionable recommendations to enhance the resiliency of Brookline's

urban tree canopy. The plan will also be utilized as a tool to identify how Brookline can best serve the community, particularly Environmental Justice neighborhoods and vulnerable populations most susceptible to climate change impacts, such as the urban heat island effect. The project has an anticipated completion date of June, 2021.

The goals of the project are defined as follows:

- Position the Town to proactively and equitably prepare for and protect against the impacts of climate change on public and private trees.
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change by strengthening the ecological functions and values provided by a healthy, balanced and sustainable tree canopy.
- Identify areas/communities that are under-served in terms of tree planting and/or are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- Provide the Town with a thorough and accurate inventory of public and private trees (via LiDAR and/or a stem-by-stem analysis) which will allow for the development of metrics and maps and the comprehensive evaluation of needs across Brookline. This inventory shall be used as a comparative baseline to monitor Brookline's urban canopy for years to come.

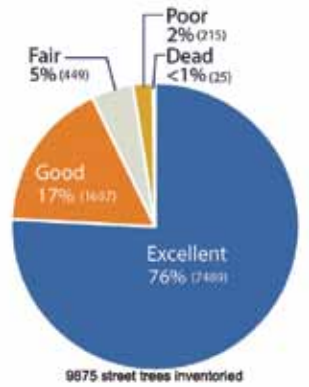


- Conduct outreach and engage the community throughout the process. Educate the public on topics including (but not limited to) climate change, climate equity, urban heat island effect, and the functions and values of the urban canopy as it relates to climate.
- Conduct a risk analysis to examine the probability and the consequences of harm resulting from climate change, and determine the most efficient use of Town funds and identify realistic priorities for minimizing risk.
- Develop an Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan outlining current and historic conditions of the urban canopy, a review of climate projections, and specific short- and long-term goals and objectives.
- Produce a comprehensive action plan, informed by up-to-date climate projections and climate research, which will provide realistic, practical recommendations for the Town.

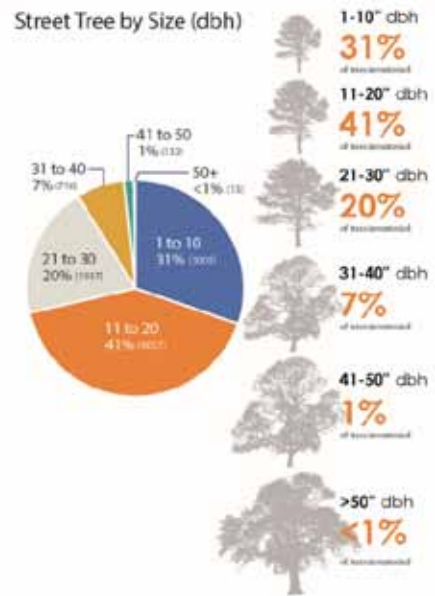
To date, the project team has conducted a stem-by-stem inventory of Brookline’s street trees, a LiDAR flyover, and soil sampling, and has held two virtual public forums. The Parks and Open Space Division has also created a survey to determine community priorities and goals regarding the urban forest. You can access the survey online via the following link: <https://www.opentownhall.com/9325>. To learn more about the project, please visit the project webpage at [www.brooklinema.gov/urban-forest](http://www.brooklinema.gov/urban-forest). If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Project Manager, Katie Weatherseed, at [kweatherseed@brooklinema.gov](mailto:kweatherseed@brooklinema.gov).

*Katie Weatherseed is the Conservation Assistant for the Town of Brookline’s Parks and Open Space Division. She is also the Project Manager for the Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan.*

Street Tree Conditions



Street Tree by Size (dbh)





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Celebrating 25 years of Brookline GreenSpace Alliance’s environmental education, activism, and advocacy, supporters of a GreenSpace Grove contributed to the planting of 25 tupelo trees along the Promenade. This grove celebrates the contribution of Brookline citizens who enhance and improve our green spaces; small and large acts of volunteerism that have made Brookline a special, healthier place to live. The tree-lined promenade affords visitors a view of the park’s fields, meadows and woods and will stand as a reminder for future generations that parks need stewards. Fisher Hill Reservoir Park is protected in perpetuity by a conservation restriction held by the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance.